A Comparison Between an Internet Communications Platform and Traditional Obstructive Sleep Apnea Support

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ABSTRACT

Background: Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is a critical health problem and a danger to the public's health and safety. The prevalence of OSA and consequent morbidity and mortality are on the rise. Approximately 30 million people have OSA with men being more likely to develop OSA with increased age and correlates to obesity. Additionally, patient follow up care is critical.

Methods: To minimize telephone contact with the patient, this project is evaluating a new technology that allows the patient to answer questions daily on a stand-alone device that records their response. At the end of the day, the device will contact the server at a 1-800 number and upload the responses and download the next day's questions. Trained medical personnel access and review patient responses on the server, contacting the patients if there are any abnormalities in the patient response.

Results: Telemedicine has already proven to reduce costs in sleep disorders. This new technology has the potential of providing greater savings in patient follow up care and reduced visits to the emergency room.

Conclusions: This project provides an objective measure to evaluate the effectiveness of new technology and may provide a basis for deploying the technology throughout the Army Medical Command.